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THE

Chieftains of Vendee

Cathelineau, La Roche-Jacquelein, Charette, Stofflet, and Sombreuil.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF THE

BARON DE BARANTE.

Edited by

EDMUND GOLDSMID, F.R.H.S., F.S.A. (Scot.)

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The Chieftains of Vendee.*

CATHELINEAU.

IN the month of March, 1793, the National Convention ordered a levy of 300,000 men. In many provinces there were at first some instances of disobedience : in the West, where the tyranny of the Revolution had already been exercised in persecuting the priests who were dear to the people, the rising was general : it broke out at the same time in several districts of Anjou, Poitou, and Brittany.

At Saint-Florent, in Anjou, the drawing for the army had been appointed for the 10th March ; the young men betook themselves thither, with the intention not to obey. In place of trying pacific measures with them, they were threatened ; they rebelled : they were fired upon ; the fight became general ; the young men had the advantage, put to flight the authorities and gendarmes, pillaged

* In the following translation, passages which are mere repetitions, have been, in some cases, abridged.

the Hotel de Ville; and then, without any foresight, without dreaming of the terrible vengeance they were to draw on themselves, they returned to their homes.

In the village of Pui-en-Mange, near Saint-Florent, lived a peasant, a linen merchant, named Jacques Cathelineau; he was a man of about 34, full of piety, and respected by all the parish for the gravity of his manners and his character. He was married, and the law of enlistment did not affect him. He was quietly engaged in his house, kneading bread, when some one came and told him what had hsppened at Saint-Florent. He perceived in an instant the consequence of this mutiny, and resolved to repair this imprudence by taking a great and prompt resolution. He hastened to assemble the inhabitants of the village, and to speak forcibly to them of the chastisement that awaited them if they did not revolt more openly.

Cathelineau was a shrewd man, with great power over his fellows; the young men believed him, and took up arms. He marched to another village, sounded the tocsin, persuaded those there as he had persuaded the first. When his troop numbered about 100 men, he boldly attacked a military post, carried it and took possession of a cannon. On the next day, he presented himself before the little village of Chemillé, and took it,

in spite of the garrison and three pieces of artillery. The cannon did not frighten these courageous peasants; as soon as the flash told them of a discharge, they threw themselves on the ground to escape it, rose up at once, ran forward while the pieces were being re-loaded, and lay down again during the explosion, and in this way reached the battery, and fought the artillerymen hand to hand.

Cathelineau's troop, after being joined by several other peasants of the neighbouring parishes, which had also revolted, ventured to attack Cholet, the chief town of the district, and even succeeded in chasing the Republicans out of it.

This revolt became by this circumstance so important that the peasants wished to have more noteworthy chiefs; they went and brought from their country-houses M. de Bonchamp and M. d'Elbée, and forced them so to speak to place themselves at the head of this insurrection of Anjou; but Cathelineau and Stofflet, who had been the first to lead their comrades to victory, remained very important personages in the army they had created. It was at first less happy than it had been under their orders; the insurgents lost almost all the territory of Anjou, and were chased as far as the Sèvre. M. de La Rochejaquelein, having better success on his side, came to the help of the Angevins. Then began the

great successes of the Vendean army. Cathelineau continued to be the object of high esteem. He possessed entrancing eloquence, an extraordinary intelligence for war, the talent of directing the peasants, and of making them do everything, a rapid glance of the eye, and a quick resolution; the Vendeans have been heard to say that none of their chiefs shewed more talent than Cathelineau. The peasants bore him an extraordinhry veneration, by reason of his piety and his discipline, to such a degree that they called him the saint of Anjou, and placed themselves, when they could, near him in the battle, thinking that none could be wounded at the side of such a holy man.

After the capture of Saumur, at the moment when the Vendeans were at the height of their prosperity, M. de Lescure, one of the wisest of the chiefs, proposed that they should not leave an army which had become so important any longer without a general and without discipline; for up till then brave peasants had followed to battle men in whom they had confidence, and who, sincerely devoted to the same cause, agreed among themselves, without one having authority over the other: it was thus that great victories had been won. M. de Lescure added at the same time that he gave his voice for Cathelineau; this choice was ratified with acclamation by all the other chiefs. The good Cathelineau appeared confused

and surprised at it. Yet, to nominate as general-in-chief a simple peasant was a politic stroke.

Cathelineau led the Vendean army from Saumur to Nantes, which was to be attacked in concert with M. Charette, who commanded the insurrection of the Bas Poitou. This expedition was ill managed: the peasants, on setting out from Saumur, had already marched several days, and their ardour always relaxed as soon as they had to pass a week away from their cottages and families. Some chiefs were absent on account of their wounds, or because they were engaged elsewhere. There were faults and blunders in the attack, and the defence was keen and stubborn. For a whole day, the 28th of June, 1793, the Vendeans obstinately tried to penetrate into the town; they were not able to succeed in this, and were constantly repulsed. The chiefs tried vainly to give the peasants still more ardour and spirit. Cathelineau, after having made during the whole day the most courageous efforts, fell, struck by a bullet in the breast. Already M. de Fleuriot, commandant of the division of M. de Bonchamp, had been killed; the Vendeans lost heart; their army dispersed, abandoned the right bank of the river, and crossed the Loire. The general was carried in a dying state to Saint-Florent; he only survived twelve days, and expired honoured by the regrets of the whole army.

He left a poor widow and a son, whom the glory of his father had not raised from his obscure state at the Restoration. Then he was gazetted an officer in the Royal Guard. After the revolution of July, he returned to Anjou, and found himself drawn into the unhappy and imprudent attempts at civil war. Surprised by a military detachment in a farm where he was sheltering fugitives, the soldiers fired at him through a trap door. He was thus killed without striking a blow: an hereditary victim of the civil discords, and of his devotion to the cause to which his father had been sacrificed forty years before.

HENRI DE LA ROCHEJAQUELEIN.

Henri Duvergier de La Rochejaquelein was born in 1773 at the castle of La Durbellière, near Chatillon, in Poitou; his father, the Marquis de La Rochejaquelein, colonel of the Royal-Pologne regiment, emigrated at the commencement of the Revolution. Henri remained in France, and entered the Constitutional Guard, which the decrees of the the Assembly had authorised the King to form. When the clamours of the Revolution forced him to disband it, the King made a secret engagement with most of the officers not to leave Paris. He might require them for his protection; besides, by emigrating they would

have confirmed the accusation brought against the composition of this Guard.

On the 10th of August Henri de La Rochejaquelein placed himself among the defenders whose efforts were powerless to save the King. After having risked the dangers of the last day of the Monarchy, he with difficulty left Paris and returned to Poitou.

Some seditious outbreaks had been easily suppressed. The government of the Revolution seemed strong and formidable. Henri de La Rochejaquelein, instead of retiring alone to the castle of La Durbellière, from which all his family were absent, and where he would have been exposed to suspicions, went to stay at Clisson, in the midst of the family of his cousin, the Marquis of Lescure. They lived there in retreat and silence, awaiting the outcome of events.

In the month of March, 1793, the left bank of the Loire rose; Cathelineau and Stofflet had commenced the civil war. The situation became a difficult one for M. de Lescure and M. de la Rochejaquelein. At that moment there came a young peasant to see M. de La Rochejaquelein: Chatillon was already in the hands of the insurgents; the civil war was on the point of extending from the edge of the Loire into the interior of the country. "Sir," said the young fellow to M. de La Rochejaquelein, "it is said that you are going

on Sunday to enlist into the militia. Is such a thing even possible, seeing your peasants are fighting against enlistment? Come with us, Sir; all the country desires you, and will obey you."

Henri de La Rochejaquelein decided at once; on leaving M. de Lescure, who waited till matters came to the same point in his own parish, he embraced him, exclaiming, "If they imprison you, I will deliver you." He went and placed himself at the head of his peasants; it was then that he uttered those words, since become famous—"My friends, if my father were here, you would have confidence in him; as for me, I am but a child; but by my courage I shall show myself worthy to lead you. If I advance, follow me; if I retreat, kill me; if I die, avenge me."

In a few days he expelled the Republicans from Aubiers, from Châtillon, which they had retaken, and from Tiffanges. There he effected a junction with the other insurgent bands; they marched on Bressuire. As he had said, he delivered M. de Lescure, who had been placed under arrest.

It was at this moment that the war of La Vendée assumed a character of grandeur, and became formidable to the Republic. Each enterprise, each combat in an unceasing and restless war, was, for Henri de La Rechejaquelein, an occasion for showing his ardour and courage. Little occupied with the political side of the

insurrection, without ambition, without vanity, his disposition made of him above all a brilliant commander of an advance-guard: he loved movement and danger. At Thouars, mounted on the shoulders of a game-keeper, he was the first to climb the wall encircling the town, pulling down the stones with his hands in order to form a breach. At the attack of Saumur, he threw his hat into the redoubt exclaiming; "Who goes to fetch it?" then he bounded over the entrenchment. Accompained only by M. de Baugé, without looking to see if he were followed, he entered the town and traversed the whole of it. At the battle of La Roche-d'Eriqué he had his thumb smashed.

After the disasters which forced the Vendeans to pass over to the other side of the Loire, all the chiefs named Henri de La Rochejaquelein their general. He declined with tears, pleading as his excuse his great youth: saying that his sole merit was the knowledge of how to fight, that the discussions of councils of war annoyed him, and he had never anything to say at them, that he would not dare to impose silence on the pretentions of so many almost independent chiefs. Besides, it was against his opinion that the Loire had been crossed; he had consented only with a kind of despair to leave the country where the army found itself on its own ground, in the midst

of its resources, and favoured by local circumstances. To take upon himself the task of leading it back was to render himself responsible for horrible calamities which he could not prevent. Nevertheless, pressed to accept by M. de Lescure, who was on his death-bed, he did so.

A march was made to Laval; a corps made up of National Guards tried in vain to stop the Vendeans; M. de La Rochejaquelein launched himself as usual in pursuit of his enemies who were in flight; he found himself man to man with a Republican foot-soldier in a hollow. Since receiving his wound he could make no use of his right hand, and carried the arm in a sling; in this danger, he seized the soldier by the neck with his left hand, compressed it, and, guiding his horse with his legs, he prevented his adversary from making use of his musket. The Vendeans arrived to help their general; they wished to kill the soldier. "Return to the Patriots," said Henri to him, "and tell them that you found yourself man to man with the general of the brigands, who had only one hand, and that you could not kill him."

While the Vendeans took some rest at Laval, the Republican army, increased in numbers and with better troops, advanced to pursue them. The battle of Entrames did great honour to M. de La Rochejaquelein: he there showed the cool-

ness and versatility of the general, and no longer merely the chivalrous temerity of a commander of light troops. His authority in the army became thereby greater, though far from being uncontested. He would have liked to profit by this victory to lead back the Vendeans to the other side of the Loire. This was the great subject on which they divided: the Augevins, the Bretons, the Prince de Talmond, the men of chimeras, who dreamt of a march on Paris, were opposed to the general's design, and shewed him all its difficulties. It was then that it was decided to reach a seaport to enter into communication with the English; they marched on Granville; it was the route on which least resistance was to be found. Arrived before Granville, after a murderous attack of thirty-six hours, the Vendean army was obliged to give up its design. They thought of pushing towards Normandy; but a general cry compelled a return to the Loire; a return was made by Pontorson and Dol. Two Republican armies had advanced to block the path of the Vendeans. It was one of the great battles of the war; chiefs and soldiers performed prodigies of valour. The combat lasted 24 hours: the insurgent army obtained a complete advantage. The route was cleared, and the march was resumed by way of Fougères, Ernée, Mayenne, Laval, and La Flèche. In order to cross the Loire, it was necessary to

occupy Angers or Saumur: Angers was decided upon. The attack lasted thirty hours, and was repulsed.

This settled the fate of La Vendée; despair seized on the peasants; no way of recrossing the Loire was now to be seen; healthy men were required, illness became epidemic; the wounded could no longer be taken care of. The army began to disperse; the women, children, and old men could no longer follow them; they scattered over the country as chance led them.

The Le Mans route was taken by the majority. Arrived at La Flèche, the bridge was found to be blocked and the town occupied by the Republicans. M. de La Rochejaquelein took with him 300 horsemen, put an equal number of foot soldiers on horseback, crossed the river higher up, and surprised the town while the garrison was occupied with the false attack which had been continued before the bridge. The army was once more saved by its General; but these were the last convulsions of agony.

The defeat at Le Mans was the fatal ending of this unhappy expedition, and the Vendean army wandered for two months—chased, and yet victorious almost every day. Its energy was sapped, and the bravest men allowed themselves to sink into listlessness and idleness. "Sirs," said M. de la Rochejaquelein with bitterness, "it is not

enough to contradict me in council, you abandon me in the fire of battle."

The Republicans attacked Le Mans on the 15th December 1793. M. de La Rochejaquelein tried to defend the approaches of the city, and succeeded in holding his ground for some hours in a fir wood which crosses the road. But he no longer found his brave and faithful Vendeans with him. Their force and courage were spent; three times he wished to throw himself into the midst of his enemies, but no one followed him now. While crossing a ditch on horseback he fell, rose up with rage in his mind, and thought that his duty was to return into the town and attempt some defence. Everything there was already in disorder. He had, however, two pieces of artillery placed on the bridge, and protected for some moments the disordered flight of the army; then he followed, like the others, the road from Le Mans to Laval. On the next day he met a peasant who had not quitted the town till eight o'clock at night, having continued to fire his musket in the streets. Henri embraced him. "That's what I should have done," said he; "I ought to have died there; it was my duty." From this moment despair fastened on him; he had no longer any other thought than death.

They hastened to regain the banks of the Loire, and by way of Laval and Craon to reach

Ancenis; it was certain that no means of crossing would be found, and accordingly M. de La Rochejaquelein had a little boat, which he had noticed in a pond, placed on a waggon. On the 18th December the Vendeans reached Ancenis; the Republican columns had not yet occupied the village. It was necessary to hasten in order to cross the river: fronting them on the left bank were four large boats loaded with hay: the last hope was to get possession of them, and make them serve for the passage of the army.

M. de La Rochejaquelein, Stofflet, and M. de Baugé stepped into the wherry which had been brought: some others of the more determined officers embarked in another small boat: planks, casks, and hogsheads were collected; they were used in constructing rafts; all eyes were fixed on the two small boats. M. de La Rochequelein reached the other side: he commenced to get the boats which were laden with hay emptied; a strong Republican patrol arrived on the spot. M. de La Rochejaquelein and his companions were compelled to disperse into the country. Soon an armed sloop took up a position opposite Ancenis and opposed all attempts at crossing. At the same time an advanced Republican guard appeared at the entrance of the village.

M. de La Rochejaquelein wandered for several hours on the left bank of the Loire, which he

found devastated, burned, and deserted, and the houses in ruins and without inhabitants. At last, after twenty-four hours of fatigue and hunger, he came with Stofflet, M. de Baugé, and M. de Langerie to a small farm, where they took refuge. Their exhaustion was such that when the former warned them that a Republican patrol was approaching they did not care to retire, and went to sleep crouched up in the hay. They were not discovered in their hiding-place. Always keeping across country, walking by night and hiding by day, he reached the house of Mademoiselle de La Rochejaquelein, his aunt. He was utterly cast down with grief; the defeat at Le Mans and the involuntary abandonment of his army overwhelmed him with bitterness.

After three days of rest, he said to Mademoiselle de La Rochejaquelein that he wished to continue the war, to show himself to his Poitevins, gather some of them together, and die at their head. "Go, my dear," said she; "I shall never see you again, doubtless, but take with you my love and admiration."

M. Charette had at this moment approached Anjou, where the Republicans had left few forces; he had occupied Châtillon, and pushed as far as Maulevrier. M. de La Rochejaquelein went to him: he was received coldly; M. Charette did not even invite him to sit at his table. A few

moments after, the muster was sounded; M. de La Rochejaquelein came back and found M. Charette, who said to him, "You are going to follow me." "I follow no man, Sir," said Henri; "I am accustomed to be followed."

The peasants of the neighbourhood who had joined M. Charette left him for M. de La Rochejaquelein. He formed a small band, and began to attack isolated detachments, and surprise convoys. His name soon became a formidable one to the Republicans; they did not know where and how to fight and seize him. His retreat was in the forest of Verzins; he dressed like a peasant, a large woollen cap on his head, with his arm still in a sling, hiding in a hut made of branches. The war had become more cruel than ever; the infernal columns scoured the country; no prisoners were made; all suspected on either side of an understanding with the enemy were put to death. On the 26th January 1794, M. de La Rochejaquelein chose a very suitable moment for surprising the town of Chemillé. The fear he inspired in the Republicans became greater; the generals gave more precise commands to destroy this little band and get possession of its chief.

On the 28th he was going from Trementine to Novaillé: on the road two Republican grenadiers were met walking alone. "Do not kill them," he cried, "I wish to speak to them." He

galloped up to them. "Surrender," he said, "and you will be pardoned." One of the grenadiers turned round and fired at him point blank; the bullet struck him on the forehead; he fell dead. De Trementine and de Baugé came up in haste and sabred the grenadier. A ditch was quickly dug: M. de La Rochejaquelein and the soldier who had struck him were thrown in together.

His death remained for some days unknown; the Vendeans kept it secret. It was a fortnight before even the generals of the Convention knew for certain that M. de La Rochejaquelein had perished. The date of his death is inaccurately given in most of the accounts of La Vendée.

Among the chiefs who distinguished themselves in this sad and wonderful civil war, none has acquired a glory more brilliant, or has left a more historic name than Henri de La Rochejaquelein. The words Vendée and La Rochejaquelein are inseparably united, and one calls up the other.

Many years afterwards, when the Vendeans were reminded of the incidents of the war, their eyes would be seen to kindle, and their voices become softened, when they spoke of M. Henri.

CHARETTE.

Charette de La Contrie (François Athanase) was born at Couffé, near Ancenis, in Brittany, on the 21st April 1763. His family was an ancient one: his father had a little fortune and a large family. Charette was entrusted to the care of one of his uncles, a Counsellor of the Parliament of Rennes, who took charge of his education. He made him study at Angers, and at sixteen years placed him in the navy. In 1790, having espoused his relative, a widow much richer and older than himself, he abandoned his career. A little afterwards he left France, becoming one of the emigrés. His proud and independant character agreed ill with the spirit that reigned among the French Princes, and having had some losses at play, it is said, he soon returned.

He found himself in Paris on the 10th of August. He tried to penetrate to the Tuileries to defend the King, and was, like many others, mixed up with and dragged into the crowd of the assassins whom he wished to fight. He escaped from their midst while feigning to carry in triumph a strip of human flesh. He returned to Poitou, and established himself quietly at the little castle of Fonte-Clause, two leagues from Machecoul.

He there led a careless and frivolous life, seek-

ing all the pleasure and amusement that can be obtained by a country squire in the depths of a country, the manners of which are very rustic. Of all the noblemen of the district, he was perhaps the one whom the Revolutionists distrusted the least. The insurrection assumed in the Canton, where he was staying, a fiercer character than in the other parts of La Vendeé. The peasants took possession of the little town of Machecoul, and cruelly massacred many Republicans in it. They at first asked Charette to put himself at their head: he refused to do so. They marched then, under the orders of M. de Vue, against the town of Pornic, were repulsed, and their chief taken and executed. A second time they came back to ask Charette; he persisted in his refusal. M. de La Roche-Saint-André then became their commander, and led them again before Pornic; the town was taken: but the enemy, profiting by the few precautions of the insurgents, who had spread themselves in disorder through the streets, returned, surprised them, and revenged themselves for their defeat. The Vendeans blamed their chief; M. de la Roche had difficulty in escaping from their resentment, and crossed to the army of Anjou, where he afterwards perished.

For the third time the peasants returned to Charette, and threatened to massacre him if he would not be their general. He made up his

mind, and the lot once cast, there was no longer anything uncertain in his conduct or in his character.

The army which had just given itself to him did not join the other troops of the insurgents which had been formed in Anjou, and in Poitou. The great Vendean army was commanded by chiefs who were illustrious, rich and honoured by all the country; it counted among its numbers some experienced officers. It was composed of peasants of a submissive and intelligent character, simple but not lacking either in industry or reflection; compared to a regular army, it was doubtless but a shapeless multitude. But the troops of Charette were very different. This portion of Poitou is more retired than the rest of the Bôcage; there are fewer villages; there were fewer noblemen, all poor and out of the world of business. Their influence over the people was less; besides, the first circumstances of this revolt, in which the peasants had been left completely to themselves, had given quite a different character to this part of the insurrection.

The cruelties that the peasants had at first committed repelled all moderate men who would have been tempted to take part in the rebellion. The blood they had shed had altered all their habits, and had rendered them fierce and intractable. It should also be remarked that seven or

eight different troops had been formed; most of them were commanded by men of an inferior class, of coarse manners, who, intoxicated with their authority, at first would not recognise any superior.

Charette was but the leader of the insurgents of Machecoul and its neighbourhood. It was little by little, by the force of his character, that he became the recognised chief of all the other bands of the Bas-Poitou; still, he was always obliged to shut his eyes to the insolence of some commanders. Charette could expect little success and little glory. The horrible massacres of Machecoul continued: he would perhaps have preferred to prevent them, and never allowed them in his presence, without, however, laying great stress on their prevention. He began by attacking Pornic and took possession of it. He returned to Machecoul, where he made a slight attempt to form his army, and provide himself with a body of cavalry; for he had only thirty-six horses in the troop. Shortly after, he advanced on Challans and was completely repulsed. He experienced a similar check before Saint Gervais: his soldiers did not take to the war, and did not learn to obey his voice.

Soon General Beysser left Nantes, and reached Machecoul without hindrance; the insurgents made no attempt to defend themselves there. Meanwhile Charette succeeded in establishing himself

at Légé, and in holding the place for some time. It was there that the spirit of sedition, emboldened by the reverses of the general, declared itself all at once among the insurgents. A man named Vrignaud who had shown some bravery and capacity, believed he had something to complain of in Charette, accused him of not having furnished him with provisions, as it had been agreed upon, and wished to make him give up the command. The Marchioness de Goulaine, whose influence in this canton was considerable, thought that Charette had neither enough talent nor enough courage to lead the insurgents. At last his troop mutinied against him; he lacked not firmness, sabred some of the mutineers, and managed to maintain himself in command.

Next, the authority of M. de Royraud who commanded another troop of insurgents, and who had just attained a great success, was employed against him. Charette, forced to quit Légé, having sought refuge in Montaigu, M. de Royraud refused to receive him. With rage in his heart, Charette assembled the few men that remained to him, and rashly attacked the Republicans at Saint-Colombin; he there gained a complete advantage, and proved to M. de Royraud how unjust and petty the intrigues hatching against him were.

They concerted together an expedition which succeeded, and which replaced Charette in a better

position. He retook Légé ; he saw himself anew master of all the country, and drove the Republicans from Machecoul, gaining over them a very important victory in which Vrignaud was killed.

It was almost at that moment that the great Vendean army took Saumur : up till then it had had no communication with Charette. M. de Lescure wrote him a letter congratulating him on his success and invited him henceforth to concert his operations with the main army. Charette was at first flattered with the consideration shown him; the attack on Nantes was resolved upon. The army of Cathelineau was to advance by the right bank of the Loire ; Charette was charged with the task of penetrating among the suburbs of the left bank. Some unforeseen circumstances, some faults committed by the chiefs of the army of Anjou, and above all the obstinate resistance of the Republicans, made the attack miscarry.

Cathelineau had perished in this fight. It was desired that the man who should replace him should command not only the main army but all the insurrection : Charette consented to this arrangement. M. d'Elbée succeeded by petty intrigues in obtaining the command, and Charette was not even chosen among the four generals of division who were named. He refused to allow his army to be disposed of in such a manner. All these nominations remained without effect, except

that of M. d'Elbée, to whom the empty title of general-in-chief was left.

When, in the month of August, the attack on Luçon was planned, Charette united his troops again to all the other insurgent forces. The desire of showing what he and his soldiers were worth caused him to ask the most dangerous post. Lescure and himself began the attack with a kind of rivalry, each wishing to gain the esteem and admiration of the other. They obtained at first some success, but the incapacity of d'Elbée and the superiority of the Republican artillery rendered this first advantage useless. The Vendeans were completely defeated.

Charette returned to Légé, and for a month nothing of importance took place. Charette during this leisure resumed his habits of amusement and improvidence. His general's quarters were devoted to pleasure. Many women were assembled there; dances were often held. Elegance did not adorn these fêtes, which were given in the midst of an army of peasants; they were rather rustic amusements than frivolous distractions. Charette gave himself up to them with a kind of ardour, and waited always till the last moment to attend to serious matters. Once in a fight, nothing equalled his ardour, his courage, and, above all, his obstinacy.

Towards the middle of September better com-

bined efforts were directed against the Vendeans. The garrison of Mayence and other vetcran troops, commanded by skilful generals, entered the Bas-Poitou. Charette saw that all resistance was useless. He withdrew to the confines of the Sèvre, and rejoined the main Vendean army. It was there that the insurgents gained the victory of Torfou, where the Republicans were utterly defeated. The day after, Lescure and Charette marched on Montaigu, and there obtained a brilliant victory ; but in place of rejoining the rest of the army to combine a general attack, they advanced and defeated the enemy again at Saint-Fulgent. Bonchamp and d'Elbée, deprived of reinforcements on which they counted, could do little. This want of concert caused discord between Charette and the chiefs of the other army. Some imprudent words had often wounded his overweening vanity. His talents were seen only to advantage when he was alone and independent. There were in the main army many chiefs whose military genius had something more brilliant, whose minds were more accustomed to men and business, and yet Charette felt in himself that he was more capable than any one else to command. That careless resignation, that soldier's fatalism which never fears danger, that entire sacrifice of his own life which gives man a kind of power, made a true civil war chief of Charette.

Besides, those whose souls were more chivalrous, whose opinions sprang more from the bottom of the heart, might, in spite of their heroic devotion, feel themselves desperate at their reverses, at the woes of their country, of their soldiers, of their families, at seeing a cause which they believed noble and just succumb; Charette was unalterable. In the depths of distress, when everything seemed lost, he was seen, with a smile on his lips, raising the courage of those who surrounded him, leading them into the fight, and hurling them on the enemy.

Seeing then his cantonments freed, Charette, under the pretext of some quarrel over the distribution of the booty, left the army which had just saved him, abandoning it as a prey to all the Republican forces which it had drawn on itself to defend him. He, on the contrary, found himself less closely pressed, and profited thereby to attack the island of Noirmoutier, the possession of which might give him easy and important means of communication with the English: he had not yet had any transactions with them. He succeeded in this enterprise at the very moment that the main army, beaten at Cholet, was compelled to cross the Loire.

Charette had soon to defend himself against powerful attacks, to meet which he did not at first take sufficient precautions; a brave and skilful

general named Haxo, marched against him, drove him to the sea, and blocked him up in the marshes of Bouin. Charette abandoned his cannon and his horses, and succeeded in leading his army out of a circle where it seemed impossible for it not to be exterminated.

Henceforward the war took a new character: chief of an army without provisions and without baggage, too weak to maintain itself in any position, Charette moved from one place to another: the men, women, and children, were eager to conceal the trace of the insurgents, and to aid them in surprising the enemy. For the Republicans, the Bôcage was a desert without victuals, without habitations; for Charette, it was covered with spies and lacked no resource.

He skilfully took advantage of the favorable points with which his position, apparently desperate, furnished him. Sometimes, he fell upon the rear-guard of the Republicans; sometimes he surprised their convoys, attacked their isolated columns, and showed himself always where he was least expected; sometimes his enterprises miscarried, but on the next day he began at another point. Fatigue, wounds, the treachery of some of his officers, the death of those in whom he trusted, nothing overcame his constancy. Such was the way he spent three months, over-running the whole of the Bas-Poitou; he even advanced to

Maulevrier in Anjou, where M. de La Rochejaquelein, a fugitive, and separated from his ruined army, came to see him: he gave no welcome to this brave and unhappy chief, and they parted in anger. All those who had served in the main army, and had taken refuge with Charette left him to follow La Rochejaquelein. Charette re-crossed the Sevre, and retired to his own district, where General Haxo continued to harass him. At last, on the 19th of March, Haxo was separated from his soldiers, and was killed while defending himself bravely. General Turreau then became commander-in-chief of the Republican army, and pursued with obstinacy his plan of annihilating the rebellion by fire and sword. Charette, in want of victuals, after a useless attack on the camp of Challans, crossed the Sevre again. M. de La Rochejaquelein had perished; Stofflet had succeeded him in the command of the army of Anjou; M. de Marigny, who had just returned to the left bank, had also an army which daily became more formidable. The three Generals had an interview: it was merely agreed that the three armies should combine their movements.

On the 6th of June a new attack on Challans, for which Stofflet had joined Charette, was repulsed, in spite of valiant efforts. Charette established himself in a more formidable position, and was no longer compelled to make war as a

fugitive. His soldiers had become more disciplined; many officers had acquired talent and experience. Encouraged by some advantages, Charette undertook to destroy three entrenched camps, where the Republicans had established themselves. This hardy and difficult project succeeded completely: the attack on the camp of Fretigué, near Challans, on the 24th September 1794, is the finest feat of arms of Charette and his army. The Vendeans showed a courage rarely witnessed, especially the men of the Bas-Poitou; Charette had never had such glory and prosperity: almost all the chiefs had succumbed. Stofflet seemed to await events; Charette alone appeared master of the country.

The Republicans feared him; Europe began to resound with his name. He himself during this time, in his General's quarters at Belleville, had begun again his habits of leisure and amusement. Since the 9th Thermidor everything had changed in the conduct of the affairs of the Republic. The horror and uselessness of the measures of extermination which had been tried against La Vendée were one of the chief crimes of which public opinion accused the Revolutionary Government. It had become almost impossible to continue this civil war: the voice of the people no longer allowed the Convention to shed blood to defend itself. On his side, Charette felt his

resources diminishing. For some time he had not had any battle to win. Again, not having taken any fresh military station, he was in want of powder: the peasants were no longer animated with the same ardour. The Convention was led to grant an entire indulgence. Representatives were sent to Nantes to offer the Vendeans an amnesty: it was a treaty made by one power with another that had to be concluded. Necessity, the natural course of circumstances, had brought it about that, at any price, the Convention wished to be able to say that the war of La Vendée had been brought to a peaceable termination.

To establish any communication whatever between two armies that recognised no law or good faith the one with the other was already a difficult thing. The recital of the precautions that had to be taken to allow Frenchmen to treat with Frenchmen seems to refer to two barbarous and savage nations, who recognise for the first time the necessity of admitting the natural rights of humanity.

The sister of Charette, who was discovered in her retreat, was employed to carry him the first propositions. They were received with mistrust. A former magistrate of Nantes, M. Bureau, a man of worthy and lofty character, and who had never shown any partisanship, was made the go-between. Softening to each party the words of the other, he

succeeded in concluding a peace to which Charette, though feeling that it was necessary, consented with had grace: it deprived him of his importance in his party and in his army, and he was obliged to conquer the repugnance of many of his companions, and even to put down a mutiny, which was raised against him by Delaunay, one of his principal officers.

At last it was agreed that the Vendeans should have the full exercise of their religion; that they should remain armed under the command of their officers as a territorial guard; that they should be paid indemnities for the ravages of the war: on these conditions they submitted to all the laws of the Republic. Such a peace was evidently but a short armistice. The fate of France, the form of her government, could not be decided in the corner of a province: it remained to be seen which party would be the one to triumph in the end.

Without understanding this necessity, Charette was compelled to yield to it: but it was with chagrin, with a kind of presentiment that henceforth he marched to his ruin. The Republican generals and the representatives, in their joy at having concluded the peace, shut their eyes on the sullen and proud countenance of Charette, on the cold and reserved mannner in which he received their advances, and on the boasting of his officers

whom nevertheless he tried to restrain within certain limits.

It had almost been exacted that he should come to Nantes as a sign of confidence and concord: he consented to this with pain: on the 26th February 1795, he made his entry there at the side of General Conclaux; he wore his white plume and all the signs of his party, which nevertheless he took off a moment afterwards. The people rushed in crowds on the path of this formidable man, with whom their minds had been occupied for two years; he allowed himself to be taken to the theatre and into society. In the midst of this kind of triumph, of this eagerness on the part of the crowd, of this affectation of cordiality on the part of the Republican chiefs, he appeared sullen, anxious, and embarrassed. On the morrow he returned to his general's quarters at Belleville. Neither on one side nor on the other was any condition of the peace carried out: the Republican troops enclosed the country on all sides: Charette remained surrounded by his officers, without communication with the other party. Meanwhile, the peasants returned to their cottages, rebuilt their ruins, began again the cultivation of their fields, and returned daily more to habits of peace. Charette, who saw how threatening and transitory such a state of affairs was; who, when making the peace, had determined to watch and be prepared,

did not the less give himself up to carelessness and idleness. When France was at the mercy of parties, when the events of each day might offer a chance of hope or even of enterprise, Charette had become again a country noble; he passed his time in hunting and dancing, did not open the letters that were addressed to him, and lighted his pipe with his despatches. He was soon in communication with the Princes of the House of Bourbon, and received daily evidences of their appreciation and of the hopes they placed in him. Many *émigrés* joined his army: he was mixed up with all the intrigues, with all the plans formed by men little capable of executing them. Nothing suited him less: he had no worldly wisdom, he knew not the character of the Princes, and did not know exactly what to make of their promises. The tone of their messengers and of the *émigrés* displeased him; their elegant manners, their easy and presumptuous language, made him often regret his peasant officers and his former companions. He wished that the Princes would send him some sergeants to drill his soldiers, instead of officers, to whom he feared to appear mediocre and vulgar; but he was none the less devoted to his cause, ready to die for it when the day of battle should come.

Towards the middle of the month of May an aide-de-camp of the Count of Artois came to

announce to him that a descent was to be made on Brittany, and that, in order to create a diversion, he would have to take up arms again. Pretexts were not wanting. The Republicans were often obliged to punish disorders created by undisciplined men, whom the negligence of their General seemed to encourage; they had often to arrest Vendeans and drag them before the military commissions.

Charette gave orders for them again to take up arms, he was obeyed. The officers had the same ardour, but not the peasants, who had tasted the sweets of peace. The entrenched camp of Les Essarts was surprised and carried. The Republican army had taken all its forces into Brittany to resist the descent on Quiberon. The civil war resumed its former ferocity; Charette had all the prisoners whom he had in his power shot, and then gave himself up to lachrymose regrets. The same aide-de-camp who had brought the order to Charette to take up arms again, came back some time after the Queberon affair, to tell him that that reverse ought not to discourage him, that powerful attempts were to be made on the coast of Poitou, and that the Count of Artois himself would come and take the command of the army. Already an English convoy had brought the Vendeans stores and money. Some months passed; the Republican forces were occupied in

Brittany. At last on the 12th October 1795, the Count of Artois disembarked at the island of Yeu. Never perhaps could Charette have believed himself so near the end of his labours. Intoxicated with praises from the princes, who named him the saviour of the monarchy; made lieutenant-general, and decorated with all the titles and all the distinctions that could be easier promised than given him; knowing that an army of *emigrés* and English was within five leagues of the coast and the disembarkation almost assured; such were the appearances; but they had more show than reality. The Vendean general longed for the arrival of the prince, because it was the only possible conclusion; but he feared the novel position in which he would find himself. It seemed to him that a court would condemn with disdain what was wanting in his mind, in his intelligence, in his language, and would not be able to appreciate the worth of his character and his energy.

The Prince was anxious to do his duty, to conduct himself in the proper way, to show his moral courage; but he was without decision, and did not know how to overcome any obstacle. The district where he was to be placed was so new to him, this army of peasants so different from what he had seen, that they embarrassed and deprived him of all nerve. The punishment of Quiberon intimidated the *emigrés*, who were quite willing

to risk their lives in battle, but not to give themselves up to a certain death. Charette, his officers, and his soldiers were full of hope and enthusiasm. The Count of Artois had promised to make for a point of the coast, where Charette was to come and await him with his army. The first landing had taken place at La Barre-des-Monts. Charette directed his march to the little port of La Franche: the army set out with extreme ardour. It had just gained an advantage, and was no more than a march from the sea, when an aide-de-camp of the Count of Artois arrived from his camp, announcing to Charette that the Prince would disembark at a more opportune time. At this blow Charette, changing countenance, turned towards his officers—"My friends, we are lost," he said. "It is my sentence of death that you bring," he said to the aide-de-camp. "You see me to-day with 15,000 men, to-morrow I shall not have 300. I can now only hide myself or perish! I shall perish!"

Thus resigned about himself, he yet complained with some bitterness of the way so many brave men who marched under his orders were played with. M. de Vauban tells us in his Memoirs that he wrote a letter to King Louis XVIII., in which the following words were found:—"Sire, the cowardice of your brother has lost all. He could only appear at the coast to gain or lose all."

The authenticity of this letter is at least doubtful. He wrote one to M. de Rivière, in which he used quite different language. "My heart is smitten," he said. "There are privations which one bears with courage and firmness, but this is one so great that it would crush a rock. Don't think this bad news freezes our courage; far from that, ever animated with the desire of meriting your esteem, we shall labour to our last breath to render ourselves worthy of it." It was deliberated whether the army should be disbanded, or if warlike operations should be continued. The Prince had caused it to be said that it would suit better to disembark in Brittany; he had just lost such a fine opportunity that no one could any longer believe he would profit by any other. But Charette never gave up to despair; besides, in such a position, fighting was still the better part.

They marched on Saint Cyr: four hundred Republicans defended themselves there obstinately until the arrival of reinforcements. The Vendean officers performed prodigies of valour; many perished or were wounded; all their efforts were in vain. At last the death of Guerin, the bravest and most spirited of the chiefs, decided the retreat. Charette for the first time showed himself beaten. He shed tears over the death of his companion in arms and of all those who had succumbed in this unhappy attack. It was all over with La Vendée.

General Hoche had soon driven Charette into a narrow territory. In vain the Vendean general wished to begin again that guerilla warfare which he had carried on in such a wonderful manner two years before: he no longer found the same help among the inhabitants, the same devotion among his companions; every day some deserted him; his soldiers, who did not fear extermination at the hands of the Republicans, submitted one after another: his friends, and his servants perished under his eyes.

Left with some faithful officers, he said to them, "Sirs, I give you back your oaths; seek your safety. As for me, when resuming arms, I swore on the Gospel never to leave them again. I shall know how to die as a soldier and a Christian." Almost all remained near him. He had no more than thirty men when General Gratien offered him his free passage to England or to Switzerland. Whether from dignity of character or from distrust, he haughtily declined, and preferred to defend himself bravely to the last moment. On the 23rd March 1796, he was pursued like a stag from thicket to thicket, from ditch to ditch. Traitors who had served under him acted as guides for his destruction. At last, harassed and losing blood, he could no longer walk, and fell on his knees at the foot of a tree, crying out, "Courage, my friends, till death. Let us fight for our God

and our King: let us die with arms in our hands." One of his companions, a peasant named Caffet, then said to him, "My General, we are overwhelmed. Give me your hat; they will take me for you, and you will escape." Without waiting for an answer, he took the hat and set out from the wood. The chasseurs hurled themselves on him, but there was there a man who knew Charette. They entered the covert, and found Charette stretched on the ground by the side of an attendant lying dead from wounds received in defending his master. General Travot asked him, "Is this you, Charette?" "Yes," he answered; "on the word of Charette, it is I." Travot defended him from all ill-treatment, and showed him the regard due to misfortune.

He was conducted to Angers: but it was resolved to take him to Nantes, where his condemnation and his punishment were loudly demanded. He arrived on the night of the 27th. Conducted to prison, he went to sleep; on the next day he was taken before the council of war.

He was dressed in a grey coat, soiled with the blood of his wounds: a kerchief covered his wounded head: he carried his left arm in a sling: three fingers of this hand had been cut off by a sabre stroke. His look was impassive, his expression calm and without effort. He was neither insolent nor cowed. He answered with simplicity

and frankness the questions of his judges, spoke of the desperate state of his party, and of the discouragement of the peasants, complained of nobody, and when the sentence was pronounced, and the cry of *Vive la République* resounded through the hall, Charette showed no emotion. He asked for a priest, received the sacraments, and showed at once a touching piety and a firm courage. On the 29th of March he was led to death; he himself gave the order to fire to the soldiers who shot him.

Charette was of a tall and rather slight build: his face was pale and thin; his features were delicate and almost effeminate; his lips straight and firm, his eyes animated and expressive; his voice was not manly and his pronunciation had a trace of mannerism; but all his person bore a character of force and of nobleness which was imposing, and indicated a man born to command.

STOFFLET.

Nicolas Stofflet, son of a miller of Lunéville, was born in 1751; he served for fifteen years in the Lyons regiment, and was their sergeant of grenadiers. He had, in a moment of imminent peril, saved the life of his colonel, the Count of Colbert-Maulèvrier, who gave him a situation as gamekeeper on his lands in Anjou. He lived

there peaceably, till the revolt burst out in his parish in the month of March, 1793. The peasants chose him at once for their leader. His troop joined that of Cathelineau, which was composed of men from the neighbourhood of Chemillé. On the 14th March, they marched on Cholet, and the town was taken.

Stofflet had from the beginning a notable importance among the chiefs, who for the most part seemed by their rank and education destined to be much his superiors. Besides his bravery, his activity and his intelligence, he had an authority over the peasants which no one else had obtained. They did not love him for he was hard and brutal; they had not for him that deference that they granted to noblemen; but he had that gift of command and of discipline which compels obedience. Armies are not made by enthusiasm and personal impulse: war, even civil war, requires a more fixed and more certain order, a rule for every day and every moment. Stofflet was a capital sub-officer; one of those men who command their equals the better because they are of the same nature and of the same origin, because they know what they must say to them and because their authority belongs only to their office and their character. Stofflet, if placed in the Republican army, would perhaps have achieved a great and brilliant career.

Cathelineau being dead, M. d'Elbée was appointed general-in-chief. Then an attempt was made to give the army a regular organisation, and Stofflet, who had distinguished himself on every occasion, was made major-general.

On the 12th September, at the battle of Doué, where General Sauterne was repulsed by the Vendeans, Stofflet was wounded by a shot in the thigh. It was the only wound he had received during that murderous war. A month after, surrounded near Châtillon by the enemy's riflemen, who had already seized him by the coat, he leapt from his horse and cut his way through his pursuers. He crossed the Loire with the army.

At the battle of Dol he allowed himself for an instant to be carried away by the panic: but coming to himself he took courage again and fought as stoutly as usual.

He passed from the Loire to Ancenis with M. de La Rochejaquelein, and did not desert him when a fugitive. Stofflet was present when he was killed near Nouaille by a soldier. Seeing the grief of those who had just beheld their young and brave chief fall, Stofflet broke in with "Your La Rochejaquelein was not Peru." He took possession of his horse and established himself as general in his place.

From this time he found himself master and chief of the insurrection in Anjou. During the

first months of 1794, the Convention and its emissaries Hentz and Francastel pursued with obstinacy the accomplishment of what General Turreau called his great plan : wishing to make a desert of two or three provinces of France, and not to leave an inhabitant, a house or even a tree in them. All representations, all complaints were useless. The answer to everything was " Kill, burn ! you have not killed or burned enough." Such are the horrors of which the proofs remain, not only in the memories of an exasperated people, but in official documents.

A second civil war, more gloomy for the Republic than the first had been, was the result of this policy. The bands of Stofflet, Marigny, Charette, and Sapinaud became more numerous. The forests were more secure refuges for them than the villages : all food resources for the Republicans disappeared, their convoys could only cross the country escorted by an army. Their columns had scarcely passed when the gatherings began again, military chiefs, local administrations, popular clubs, revolutionary committees comenced to cry out against Turreau and his plan.

The abbé Bernier had returned from across the Loire, and he joined Stofflet, who fell entirely under his influence. The army received an organisation as regular as such circumstances permitted : it was composed of eight territorial

divisions. As few men as possible were kept under arms; but Stofflet had formed a regular and paid troop of deserters, foreigners, and men of good-will; there were about 40 of them in each division. When an assembly was required, each chief of division transmitted the order to the parish captains; the inhabitants were convoked and betook themselves to the appointed places. To pay the permament soldiery, clothe and shoe them, Stofflet created a paper currency. In the forest of Vezin, which had remained an impenetrable asylum, there had been established hospitals for the wounded, workshops, a powder factory, a printing house, and even a paper-money manufactory.

Nevertheless, the inhabitants became tired of the civil war. They would have liked to inhabit the ruins of their houses, to gather the remains of their families together, and return to the cultivation of their fields.

General Canclaux, a man full of sense, of loyalty, and of gentleness, was charged in the month of October 1794 with the command of the Republican army, the forces of which were increased. In place of over-running the country with flying columns, he established garrisons in the ruins of the small towns and villages. He pitched his camps in such a way as to render communication difficult. At the same time, dis-

cipline was maintained among the troops. The inhabitants were looked after: they were persuaded to resume their accustomed mode of life. Little by little gatherings became almost impossible.

It was difficult to communicate political foresight to men who wished repose, and hoped that the Republic would allow them to enjoy it. The principal officers of Stofflet, and almost all the chiefs of division, adhered to the peace of Jaunais.

Stofflet was not at all discouraged; on the 2nd March he signed with two of his officers, who remained faithful to him, a decree, in which he announced the most severe measures against those, who, by their intrigues and their conduct, had weakened the attachment of the people to God and their chiefs.

General Canclaux resolved thereupon to take all his forces into Anjou, and fight it out with Stofflet. Stofflet attacked in succession the camps of Chalonnes and Saint-Florent, without obtaining any success in spite of courageous efforts.

He was, so to speak, hunted down on all sides. His last companions were harassed in soul and body. Still he remained inflexible, and did not seek to treat for peace.

Canclaux and the representatives preferred peace to destruction: they ordered an officer of the staff to carry proposals to Stofflet. None knew where

he was. The officer set out alone from Bressuire, wandering about the country. He was not long in being arrested: that was what he wanted. He asked to be led to the General, and was taken into a house near Cérisais. He recognised how evidently desperate the situation of Stofflet was. Without addressing a word to him, Stofflet allowed him to explain the object of his mission. Some fifteen Vendean officers were round him: they resolved to send two of their number to confer with the representatives.

Meanwhile Stofflet lost every day some of his comrades. The Abbé Bernier himself began to treat, but without haste, seeking to gain time, for he had firmly resolved that Stofflet should be the last to lay down arms.

The Abbé Bernier yielded and promised even to use his influence in rendering the peace real and solid. Stofflet came on the 2nd of May to sign at Varades the terms which had been come to.

Meanwhile, the Quiberon Expedition had, in the end of July, a deplorable issue. A little after, General Hoche came to replace General Canclaux in La Vendee. At last, on the 26th of January, 1796, urged by the agents of the Princes and by the noblemen who surrounded them, Stofflet made up his mind. At the moment when there no longer remained any chance of success, he issued a proclamation in the name of Louis XVIII.,

and appealed to the courage of his companions in arms.

Stofflet, having with great difficulty succeeded in collecting three or four hundred men, attacked the Republicans at Bressuire; he was easily repulsed. He considered the situation, disbanded his men, and endeavoured to escape. On the night of the 23rd February, the farm of La Saugrenière was surrounded by a detachment of two hundred men. The Abbé Bernier had fled three days before without giving Stofflet any warning. Stofflet himself, surprised, seized a grenadier and defended himself for some moments with extreme violence. He was conducted to Angers and questioned on the same day; the questions are still extant: his answers are simple and firm. He declared that he fought for the King. He was condemned to death with four of his companions on the 26th February 1796, and was executed the same day.

SOMBREUIL.

Charles Virot de Sombreuil was son of the Governor of the Invalides. This old man was put in prison after the 10th August. On the 2nd September he would have been massacred if his young daughter had not flung herself between her father and the assassins. She did not save him

for long. He was put back into prison, and he whom the tears of his child had snatched from murderers intoxicated with carnage, was on the 17th June 1794 pitilessly sent to the scaffold by the Revolutionary tribunal.* His son, Stanislas de Sombreuil, mounted it at the same time as himself.

Charles de Sombreuil, his other son, in one of the stormy scenes which took place at the Palais-Royal, had snatched from the hands of the populace one of the De Polignacs. Later on he emigrated. In the campaign of 1792 he served in the army of the King of Prussia. He continued to distinguish himself in the campaign of 1793 on the banks of the Rhine, and in 1794 in Holland. Few exiled officers won a more brilliant renown. After the evacuation of Holland he passed over to England.

The Minister of the King of England placed confidence in Sombreuil, and he was charged with the command of the second division of the army, formed of exiles, and destined for disembarkation. Seven regiments were placed under his orders, making up about 4000 men; they were still in Hanover; it was with them that M. de Sombreuil had just been carrying on the war in Holland. He returned to Germany in order to

* "Des bourreaux l'ont absous, des juges l'ont frappé."

receive them and to arrange everything for their departure.

At that time he was going to be married to Mademoiselle de La Bache. He left his army, embarked, and came back to London. Everything was ready for the ceremony; the bride was dressed in her bridal robes, when all at once some one came to announce to M. de Sombreuil that his army was in the roadstead at Spithead, that the wind was favourable and that there was not a moment to be lost. Scrupulous as he was in everything that touched his honour or duty he did not hesitate, and resolved to quit her whom he was never to see again. On the 16th July 1795 the ships that carried his divisions arrived in the roadstead at Quiberon.

After the failure of the expedition, M. de Sombreuil did not think of regaining the English fleet on one of the boats that covered the beach: this resource seemed to him dishonorable, and the abandonment of his companions-in-arms seemed to him more cruel than certain death. This noble devotion was shared by the officers of his division: a great number might have embarked: but they had not received the order to do so. M. de Lamoignon was seen to carry his wounded brother to a boat, and return to his doomed companions.

Having no further hope, M. de Sombreuil resolved to trust himself to a capitulation. He at once ordered his troops to yield.

He asked to see General Hoche; he dismounted and came to M. de Sombreuil, who already was almost alone. He showed him great courtesy; they were seen walking together on the sloped edge of the high cliff on which the fort is situated. M. de Sombreuil asked to be the sole victim. Hoche, as soon as he had seen the victory decided, had sent to warn the representatives of the convention. "My business is done," he said, "the rest belongs to them." They came, and M. de Sombreuil appeared before them." "Sir," said one to him, "I was cast into prison with your relatives." "Are the exiles then so culpable," answered M. de Sombreuil, "for having wished to avoid prisons and the scaffold." Then Tallien answered with much severity and haughtiness, "Sir, we have all been under the guillotine; but the thought has never entered our heads of bearing arms against our country." M. de Sombreuil broke off this conversation and gave up his sword to Tallien.

His first care on reaching Auray, where he was taken, was to write Admiral Warren a letter to let him know what had just happened. This letter is heartrending. "The abandonment of my companions would have been worse than the fate that awaits me (I believe, to-morrow morning); that I deserved a better you will agree. The esteem of the brave men who share my fate today is for me immortality. In these my last

moments, I even find a joy, if such can exist in my position, in the esteem of my comrades in misfortune, and in that of the very enemy that has conquered us. Farewell, farewell to all!"

His death was not so near as he believed. The army recoiled from the judicial massacre of the prisoners. No French officers were to be found to form the military commissions. It was necessary to bring Belgian regiments to have any judges or executioners. It was a year since Robespierre had been overthrown and since blood no longer flowed on the scaffolds. M. de Sombreuil did not seek at all to profit by all this. The sacrifice of his life was made; he refused the offers of the English admiral to plan a means for his escape. His sole thought was to obtain at the price of his life the safety of his companions.

Tallien, eager to go and celebrate in the National Convention the anniversary of the 9th Thermidor by bringing it the news of Quiberon, had left to his colleague the hateful mission of having the insurgents executed. He had neither a low nor a cruel mind. He had set out from Quiberon still in doubt; during his journey he had willingly listened to the counsels of his friend, M. Rouget de l'Isle.* To fix his name on a great act of humanity was a glory that tempted him. But he found the Convention and all his revolutionary companions in a frame of mind that turned

* The composer of the "Marseillaise."

him from those noble plans. The punishment of the exiles of Quiberon is a sadder memory than if it had taken place at the height of the Reign of Terror of the years 1793-94. M. de Sombreuil was condemned, with most of his companions; he was taken to Vannes with the Bishop of Dol, also made prisoner at Quiberon. His courage did not abandon him for an instant. He refused to allow his eyes to be bandaged, and, placing a knee on the ground, he said, "It is before my God and my King that I bow." The soldiers refused to undertake this cruel execution. Some prisoners from England were appointed to put him to death. He was then twenty-six years old.

Even to-day, after such great and varied events, the name of Sombreuil casts in all hearts a saddened memory; it recalls at once the daughter saving her old father from the hands of the murderers of September: and the brother sacrificing himself willingly to the highest demands of duty and honour, devoting himself to the saving of his companions without being able even to obtain the price of his death. In civil wars, the glory almost always belongs to the vanquished, and M. de Sombreuil has done more honour to France by his misfortunes than he would have done, had it been given him to gain the victory.

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